

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.”

“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”

“Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

A Big Book Study of Spiritual Recovery from “Self-will Run Riot” to Service and Serenity.

A Twelve-Step Workshop from January 1 through March 25, 2024

Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo. USA

(All page numbers from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted.)

The term “path”, and other analogies and metaphors, are used throughout the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps to describe our *journey of spiritual growth* from “what we used to be like”, through our “spiritual awakening”, to “what we are like now”.

Each step guides us to get on, and stay on, “our path” of recovery from alcoholism, our spiritual journey of awareness, acceptance and action. Our *spiritual awakening* is something that happens *in us*, as we learn how to let it happen *for us* and to stop doing certain things that block it from happening *to us*. *We decide to learn to do what it takes to live on “our path”.*

Step Four: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” (p. 59)

What is “searching”? Willing to look, be *aware* of and *accept* whatever I find.

What is “fearless”? Willing to be “less afraid” to *act* on what ever is disclosed.

What is “moral”? “Right/wrong”, i.e. “good” or “bad” *character*—relationships.

“Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action ... at once ... to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.” (pp. 63-64)

Step Four is my first opportunity to acknowledge what is “blocking me” on my “path”.

My new path, my new journey of spiritual growth in awareness, acceptance and action, requires me to get a “spiritual re-alignment” to stay on my new path. (See p. 27)

I acknowledge my need for “fact-finding and fact-facing” to “align” my spiritual life and restore me to my original “designed alignment”.

We learn self-examination. We acknowledge what in us is blocking us on our new spiritual path.

“First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure.

Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.” (p. 64)

RESENTMENTS ... change into Forgiveness on my new spiritual path.

“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else.” (p. 64)

I *willingly* become aware of the reality of resentments in my life. (See p. 65)

“To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got.” (p. 66)

I *honestly* accept my limitations when it comes to resentments. (See p. 66)

“We could not wish [resentments] away any more than alcohol.” (p. 66)

I *open-mindedly* act to reduce my resentments with God’s help. (See p. 67)

“We asked God to help us ...” (p. 67)

“God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” “

“... God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of ... every one.” “

“We admitted our wrongs honestly ... willing to set these matters straight.” “

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Observations on Resentments.

My “spiritual re-alignment” begins with honest and thorough self-examination.

“When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.” (p. 64)

To be “spiritually sick” is to be shut ... off from the “sunlight of the Spirit” (of God). (p. 66)

For me, anger is the manifestation of my ingratitude toward God for my circumstances.

Resentments (anger in the past tense) result from my unwillingness to forgive someone.

Forgiving doesn’t mean it didn’t hurt; or embarrass me; or cost me time, money and loss of prestige; or that they shouldn’t be punished by the proper authority for it.

Forgiveness doesn’t mean it wasn’t unfair, or that I need to wait for them to do it again.

My unwillingness to forgive guarantees that my resentments block me from God!

I ask God to “save me from being angry”. I begin to forgive, I open myself to receive God’s care of Power and Love. I begin to “align with” the spiritual path of God’s Way, not my way.

Resentment is the “number one offender”. Thus, forgiveness is the “number one liberation”!

FEARS ... change into Trust in God on my new spiritual path.

“[Fear] was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it.” (p. 67)

I willingly become **aware** of my fears. (See p. 68)

“We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper ...” (p. 68)

I honestly **accept** the cause of my fears. (See p. 68)

“Self-reliance ... didn’t go far enough.” (p. 68)

“... great self-confidence ... didn’t fully solve the fear problem, or any other.” “

I **open-mindedly act** to reduce my fears with God’s help. (See p. 68)

“We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves.” (p. 68)

“We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be.” “

Observations on Fear.

My “spiritual re-alignment” continues as I acknowledge and seek God’s help with my fears.

“At once, we commence to outgrow fear.” (p. 68)

My fears linger and grow until I ask God to help me to relieve my fears. As I learn to trust God to remove my fear, I live in less fear.

To me, fear is not the enemy of love. Fear is the enemy of my security. I now hope to live with God’s care. I “fear” living without God’s care and God’s help. I learn to love God’s care.

The only thing keeping me from God’s love, care, Power and help is too much self-reliance.

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Inconsiderate SEXUAL CONDUCT ... becomes Consideration on my new spiritual path.

“Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there.” (p. 68)

I *willingly* become **aware** of my sexual and relationship inconsideration of others.

“We all have sex problems ... human ... what can we do about them?” (p. 69)

I *honestly* **accept** the cause of my inconsiderate treatment of others.

“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?” (p. 69)

“Whom had we hurt?” “

“Did we ... arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness?” “Were we at fault?” “

I *open-mindedly* **act** to reduce my inconsideration of others with God’s help.

“We ask God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” (p. 69)

“In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter.” “

“... have the honest desire to let God take us to better things.” (p. 70)

Observations on Sexual Conduct (Inconsideration).

My “spiritual re-alignment” further improves as I acknowledge and seek God’s help to correct my selfish, thoughtless inconsideration of others in all of my relationships.

“God alone can judge ... we let God be the final judge.” (pp. 69-70)

“We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance ... for sanity ... strength to do the right thing.” (p. 70)

My inconsideration of others becomes less when I ask God to help me with my selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear—in all my relationships.

I learn to stop fearing our differences and see them as opportunities to seek healthy,

God-centered growth in my relationships—with an attitude of love and tolerance.

I ask God to meet my needs instead of depending on others for joy and happiness.

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In Step Four, I begin to stop living in resentment. I begin living with a *forgiving* spirit.

In Step Four, I begin to stop living in fear. I begin living in a *trusting* relationship with God.

In Step Four, I begin living with more *consideration* for others.

In Step Four, I become “re-aligned” on my spiritual path of recovery from alcoholism. I become willingly aware of my resentments, fears and selfish inconsiderations that block me from God’s care. I honestly accept the limitations of my self-reliance and the selfishness of my inconsideration. I open-mindedly act with my written inventories and my prayers to “align” myself more with God’s will for me as I fully acknowledge my need and desire for God’s care.

“We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him.” (p. 71)

Next Time: Step Five—discover the obstacles in our path on the “Broad Highway”.